



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE PURIM TOOTHACHE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week is of course Purim. Please enjoy this true Purim story.

Menachem was a busy dentist. On the day of Purim, he only had one hour free to do the mitzvah of hearing the Megillah.

As he was driving to shul to hear the Megillah, he got a phone call from one of his patients. His patient was in extreme pain from a tooth infection and he wanted to see the dentist right away to alleviate the pain. His patient was not in danger of dying, but he was in great agony.

Dr. Menachem felt very torn. This person was in great pain and he needed help. Dr. Menachem could help him. But if he would help him, he would miss the mitzvah of listening to the Megillah.



GOVERNORS DICTATE - FATHERS LOVE

The Arizal taught that Yom Kippur is a day like Purim. He indicated that on some level the Kedusha of Purim exceeds that of Yom Kippur. This certainly needs to be understood. Furthermore, this comparison implies that the two holidays are somewhat similar and in that similarity Purim is the greater of the two. What is the similarity of these two Holidays?

Both holidays celebrate HaShem's forgiveness to His people for a grave sin that was perpetrated earlier. The sin our people perpetrated before Yom Kippur was our rejection of HaShem by making the Golden Calf. The sin our people perpetrated before the Purim miracle was our participation in King Achashveirosh's banquet made in honor of his final conquest of the Jewish people.

King Achashveirosh had calculated that 70 years had passed since the Babylonian exile began. It was known that the Babylonian exile would last only 70 years after which HaShem would bring His people back to Israel and rebuild the Bais HaMikdosh. When the King saw that the people were still subjected to him after this deadline he assumed that HaShem had abandoned His people and was not going to take them back. He also assumed that the Bais HaMikdosh, too, would not be rebuilt. This was a great joy for him. In recognition of HaShem's abandonment of His people and of His Temple, he made a great banquet to which he invited the Jews of the capital to participate. Naturally, he wanted them to participate since their attendance would be testimony to HaShem's abandonment. It was for this very reason that their attendance was considered a terrible rejection of HaShem. As HaShem's people we must know that He will never abandon us and we will never abandon Him. The participation in the King's festival was tantamount to the absolute rejection of HaShem.

Just as in the sin of the Golden Calf we repented and HaShem took us back into his Graces, so too at the Purim story when we repented HaShem redeemed us. This is similarity

Dr. Menachem wondered which mitzvah would take priority. Would the Torah mitzvah to help a person in pain, override his rabbinical mitzvah to hear the Megillah on Purim? Should he miss the Megillah entirely this Purim to take care of this patient?

Or would we say that simply alleviating another person's pain, when he is not in danger, would not override this mitzvah of hearing the Megillah. Perhaps he should do the mitzvah of Megillah and help the person later.

What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Megilla, Page 51

The Answer To Last Week's Question:

Regarding last week's question about the balloons placed on the cars, Rav Zilberstein wrote that if the people in that area have young children who would enjoy the balloons, it would be permitted to tie balloons on the cars because it can be assumed that they would enjoy it.

Regarding whether the man can take the balloons on the other cars, Rav Zilberstein wrote that it would not be considered theft because there was no kinyan, no acquisition on the balloon yet, nonetheless the man should not take the other balloons because it does not belong to him, and it will make other people upset.



between the two holidays. There is, however, a distinction. It is this distinction that makes Purim so much greater.

There are two models of authority which have the right to punish when disobeyed; the governor and the parent. Both positions command authority which the subject/child must accept. If they reject the authority, punishment is due. In both models when the subject/child repents and asks forgiveness, granting forgiveness is appropriate. The distinction between these two models lies in how this forgiveness is granted. The governor will grant forgiveness only if and when the subject begs forgiveness, not a moment earlier. The father, on the other hand, hopes that his child will request forgiveness so that he won't have to punish him. Even before the punishment is implemented the father will already set up his son's forgiveness.

Only after we repented by the Golden Calf did HaShem demonstrate his forgiveness not a moment earlier. At the story of Purim, however, even before we repented and even before we recognized the gravity of our sin, HaShem had already set up the mechanism by which we would be saved. At the very banquet at which we showed our rejection

of HaShem, there and then was when HaShem planted the seeds by which Esther would rise to her position of influence. At that banquet the King killed his wife and the wheels of redemption were already set in motion.

After we were saved in the Purim story, we looked back and realized how even before we repented, even at the time of our rejection, HaShem was already setting up our redemption. He was hoping that we would request forgiveness. How happy He was when He was able to save us.

That clarity of understanding that HaShem is not only our Master Authority but He is also our Loving Father, brought our people to higher levels of teshuvah. Therefore the Kedusha of Purim is much higher in our recognition that our relationship with HaShem transcends that of a subject to his governor; we recognized our relationship is that of a child to a loving father. Teshuvah from love transcends teshuva from fear.

May we merit to see many yeshuos this Purim.

Have a joyful Purim and a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

ACHASHTRANIM, SPEED CAMELS, AND ROBOT CAMEL JOCKEYS

In the Megillah, we read about the Achashtranim (Esther 8, 10), who rushed to change the royal decree. What are Achashtranim? Rashi says they were speed camels, camels that were trained to move very swiftly.

When we think of camels we usually think of awkward-looking animals that walk slowly and deliberately. What exactly are speed camels?

The truth is that the Persians were famous for their strategic use of camels. Historians record that the Persian king Xerxes (who might have been the Achashverosh from the Megillah) recruited a large number of camel-riding Arab mercenaries into his massive army. The riders were equipped with bows. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that Xerxes's army of camel-riding soldiers may have been up to twenty thousand men.

Camel cavalry were an important element in desert warfare throughout history due to the camel's high level of adaptability. Camels provided a mobile element better suited to work and survive in an arid and waterless environment than the horses of conventional cavalry.

In addition, according to Herodotus, the smell of the camel alarmed and disoriented horses, making camels an effective anti-cavalry weapon. When the Persian king Cyrus (Korush) went to war against the Lydian Kingdom, Cyrus was able to defeat an army twice the size of his by strategically using camel cavalry against the horse cavalry the Lydians used.

How fast is the camel cavalry? Camels are actually extremely fast. Camels can run at speeds of up to 40 mph in short sprints and they can maintain a speed of 25 mph for an hour.

When you compare this to a horse, The average racehorse's speed is approximately 40 to 44 mph and the fastest is 55 mph. But a horse can maintain that speed for only 20 seconds. Horses are not suited to be able to gallop at top speed for more than a mile or two. Camels are slower than horses but they have much better endurance in terms of long-distance running compared to horses. If you would ask, who would win a race, a camel or a horse? The answer would be that it depends on the type of race. If it was a 100-yard sprint, the horse would win. However, if it was a 26-mile marathon, the camel would likely win. It, therefore, explains why the Persians in the Megillah used speed camels to send messages across the kingdom.

Since camels are actually fast animals, camel racing is a popular sport in Western Asia, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, Pakistan, Mongolia and Australia. Professional camel racing, like horse racing at Pimlico Race Track, is a betting event as well as a tourist attraction.

There is a difference between horse racing in America and camel racing in the Middle East. Camels are often controlled by child jockeys. The reason why children are often favored as jockeys is because of their light weight. This might seem cute but it is actually very tragic. Many child camel jockeys are seriously injured by falling off the camels. In addition, often, the boys would be given very little food in order to be as light as possible. In recent history, because of the public outcry against the use of child jockeys, the United Arab Emirates was the first to ban the use of children under 15 as jockeys in camel racing.

This leads us to a slightly humorous angle, which is appropriate for Purim. In Qatar, they took this one step further. They passed a law that after 2007, all camel races would be directed by robot jockeys instead of children.

This trend took off and robotic jockeys are slowly phasing out the use of human jockeys across the world. What exactly are these robot jockeys? Originally, making robots to ride camels was not so simple. The early designs of the robot jockey confused or frightened the camels and they would not race properly.

But then a Swiss robotics firm called K-Team came up with a new design. The Swiss design included more human-like features for the robot jockeys, including a mannequin-like face, sunglasses, hats, racing silks and they even were sprayed with the traditional perfumes used by human jockeys. The robots are aluminum-framed with a "thorax", and the circuit box was about the size of a large book. With this new design, the camels started to accept being controlled by robots.

What exactly does the robot do on the camel? The robot has arms that control a whip and the reins. The robot can also monitor and transmit the speed and heart rate of the camel. It has two-way radio controls and a person with the controls would drive alongside the race track and the camel in an SUV.

The person behind the radio control can control the reins of the robot and instruct the robot to whip the camel. Newer models of robots allowed the robot to command with voices and even electric shocks.

It might be obvious why robot riding camels are not a popular Jewish sport.

(PS. You might think that the robot riding camels is just a Purim joke, but it's really not. It's true!)

Have a joyous Purim!

THEY WILL BE FINER JEWS THAN WE

Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l spoke at the 1981 Torah Umesorah convention and shared the following thoughts.

In 1981 America was absorbing many Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and they were resettling in many Jewish communities across America. Reb Yaakov felt very strongly about the responsibility that the local communities had in welcoming them and their children to Torah and her ways.

Regarding this responsibility there were two points that he wanted the audience to recognize. His first point was that our Sages teach us that the entire world is worthy of being created for just one tzaddik. Even if there is no other worthy person other than this one tzaddik, HaShem would still bring the world into existence. This was learnt from the final verse of Koheles. He explained that even if all our efforts in welcoming the newly arrived Jews will yield just one child who will become a ben Torah, it is worth all the effort we expend.

His second point was astounding. He said that even if we only succeed in stopping a Jewish child from marrying out, we have accomplished tremendous things. Why? Because when his children grow up, they will be 'tiknokes she'nishb'u' like Jewish children who were captured by non-Jews and never learned that they are Jewish.

To quote Reb Yaakov; "When Eliyahu Hanavi will come to announce Moshiach's arrival, it will be in their merit; they will be the perfect tzaddikim, they did nothing wrong. They will be finer Jews than we. Those who protected this child from intermarrying will be credited for that."

These words are quite remarkable so I have made the recording available at this link.

<https://bit.ly/rebyaakov>

Reb Yaakov's entire speech is available at TorahDownloads.com

Please be informed that Achim will be running our annual campaign next week.

Pictured: People escaping the USSR, climbing over the Berlin Wall.



THE ASK

Achim has been reaching out to the Russian speaking Jewish community since 1989. The success we experience is thanks to the support we receive from our beautiful local community. Next week Tuesday 3/11 we will begin our fundraising campaign. I encourage everyone to participate. In the merit of sharing our cherished Torah with our cherished brothers may HaShem bring us to the day when the entire world will recognize Him, when He will be One and His Name will be One. I thank you for your participation.

Paysach Diskind

Go to thechesedfund.com/achim

The printing of this week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of our dear mother, grandmother and great grandmother

Mrs. Eleanor Kolinsky, z'l

חיה בת אברהם

May the merit of hundreds and hundreds of Shabbos tables graced with beautiful Shabbos conversations be a zechus for the aliyah of her neshama.

Rosalyn and Franklyn Snitow and family

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